THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, the 2nd March 1955.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR. P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Number of wells sunk in South Arcot district for Harijans.

* 217 Q.—SRI M. ETHIRAJULU: Will the Hon. the Minister for Health be pleased to state—

(a) the number of wells ordered by the Government to be sunk in South Arcot district during the years 1953–54 and 1954–55 for the use of Harijans for drinking purposes;

(b) the number of wells sunk so far; and

(c) the expenditure so far incurred by the Government on this account?

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY:—" (a) 70 in 1953–54 and 112 in 1954–55.

" (b) 40 in 1953–54 and 21 in 1954–55.

" (c) Rs. 63,488 in 1953–54 and Rs. 54,715 in 1954–55."

SRI V. V. RAMASWAMI:—" May I know, Sir, whether these wells were sunk in the areas exclusively occupied by the Harijans or in public places? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY:—" These wells were sunk for the benefit of Harijans."

SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR:—" Are the Government satisfied that the water in the wells is good and enough for the people concerned? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY:—" I presume most of the wells provide enough water, but I cannot say that all the wells provide enough and good water."

SRI V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY:—" May I know whether these public wells which are open to all classes of people are easily accessible to the members of the Harijan community or are any difficulties felt by the Harijans in getting access to them on account of caste feelings? Has there been any complaint made to the Government in regard to that? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY:—" The public wells are open to all Harijans. Whether any difficulties are experienced in any particular place I cannot say."

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Dr. V. K. JOHN :—" What is the principle underlying the system of sinking wells for Harijans? Does it prevent those other than Harijans from taking water from those wells? Why should not wells be sunk for all persons? "

The Hon. Sri A. B. SHETTY :—" The Harijans want wells to be sunk within their own cheris. They do not want to exclude or prevent other people from taking water from those wells. But other people may not go there."

Sri M. ETHIRAJULU :—" Is there any target fixed regarding the number of wells to be sunk in the State for Harijans? "

The Hon. Sri A. B. SHETTY :—" A separate programme for sinking of wells for Harijans is under consideration."

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Sir, I request that questions Nos. 218 and 219 addressed to the Hon. the Minister for Finance and Education may be taken up tomorrow."

Mr. CHAIRMAN :—" All right. Those questions will be taken up tomorrow. Questions are now over. We shall now resume discussion on the Budget for the year 1955–56. Srimathi Clubwala Jadhav will now speak."

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 1955–56—*cont.*

* Srimathi MARY C. CLUBWALA JADHAV :—" Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to congratulate our Government and the Hon. the Minister for Finance and Education on being able to provide for the free education of all poor children up to the VIII Standard. It is clearly a very welcome feature. I also congratulate the Government on opening 2,800 new elementary schools and thank them for helping existing schools with 200 additional teachers. The opening of another 1,500 schools and the strengthening of existing schools by another 1,000 teachers in the new year covering villages with a population of 500 is indeed most welcome.

" But I am sorry to say that Public Health has not had the allocation that it should have. There is only a provision of Rs. 15 lakhs made for extension of hospitals and increase of bed-strength. We know that our hospitals are overcrowded and that the doctors and nurses are overworked. We have been working for the last thirty years in all the hospitals in the City of Madras and in recent years we find an enormous increase of patients but there are not adequate facilities to meet their needs. Therefore, I would urge on the Government to be fairer and to make an increased allotment for this purpose.